

Liquid Gold
AND
It Takes A Village

Two stories to uplift and empower
Black women to breastfeed their babies.

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THE Equity LAB

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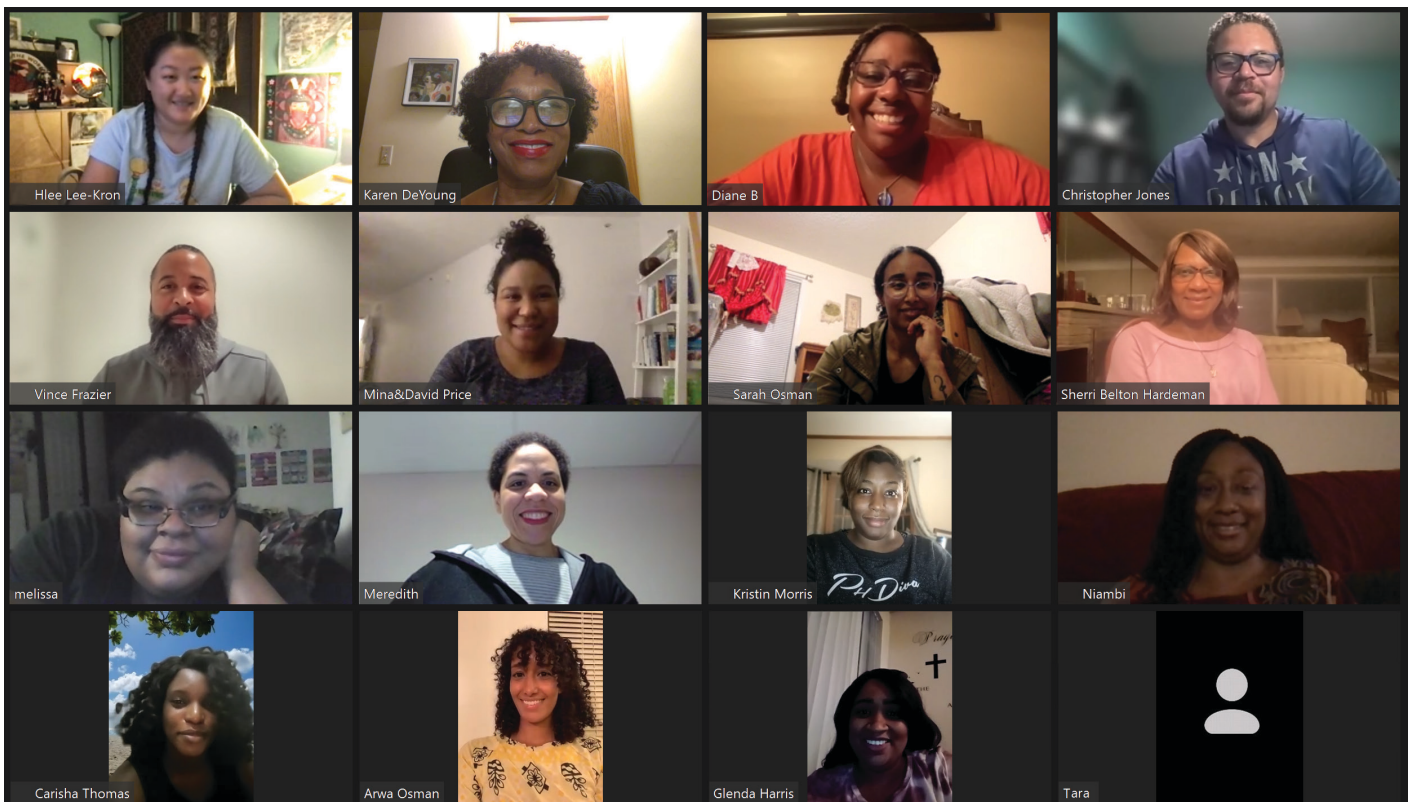
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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

To help increase breastfeeding rates among U.S.-born African American women, Ramsey County first needed to understand the core problems preventing the community from breastfeeding, as well as identifying assets the community has to leverage. To accomplish this, we embarked on wide-scale outreach efforts and held listening sessions with parents and guardians of children of all ages, as well with grandparents and community members who had an interest in or experience with this topic. By putting the community in the driver's seat, we amplified their knowledge, allowing us to face the challenges associated with breastfeeding head-on.

This core group of 12 community members played an essential role in the project. They shared their own experiences and those of community members in early listening sessions and then continued to come together during multiple equity labs where these stories were ultimately conceived. Their contributions to this campaign are immeasurable and we thank them for all they have done to nurture this project:



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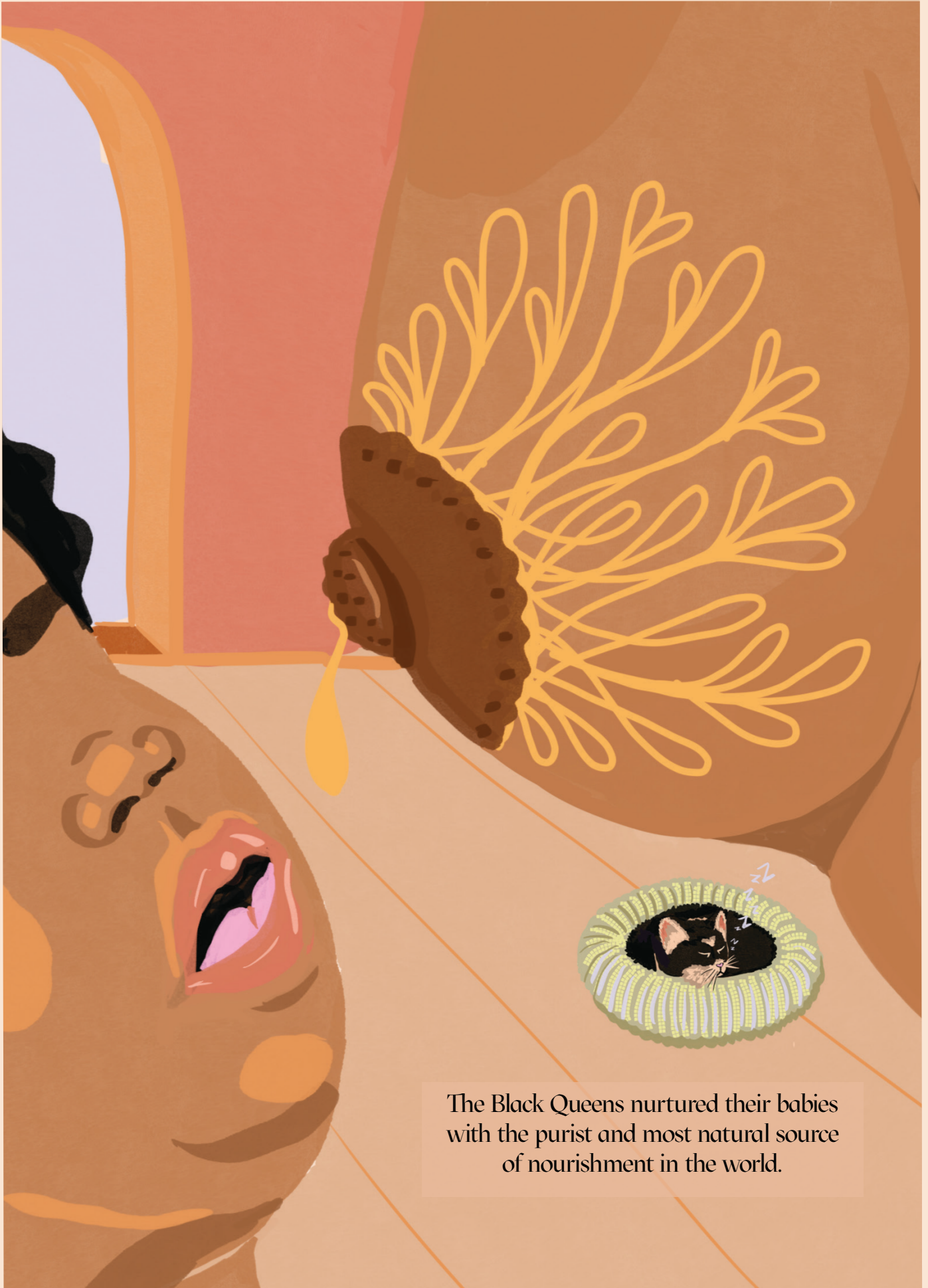
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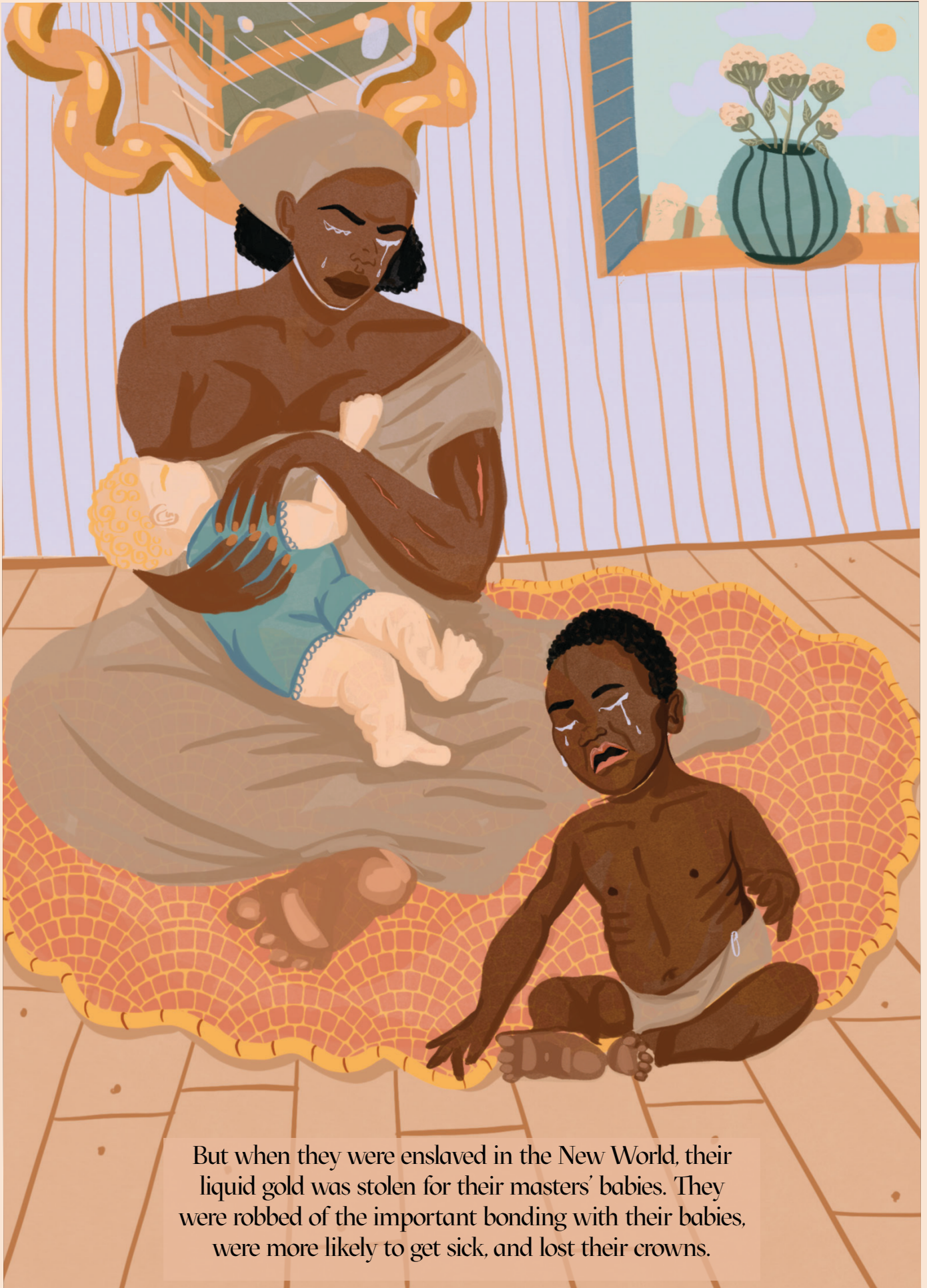
Illustrated by Leeya Rose Jackson



Since the dawn of time, Black mothers shared their magic with their babies through liquid gold: their breastmilk.



The Black Queens nurtured their babies with the purist and most natural source of nourishment in the world.



But when they were enslaved in the New World, their liquid gold was stolen for their masters' babies. They were robbed of the important bonding with their babies, were more likely to get sick, and lost their crowns.



As time went on, they were brainwashed into believing artificial substitutes were better for their own children. They were shamed while feeding in public and were led to believe their liquid gold didn't benefit their babies.



But a great awakening occurred. The Black sisterhood educated each other about the advantages of their breast milk; how it forged strong relationships with their babies and kept them healthier.



The Black Sisterhood rediscovered their magic and what they lost in the past. They decided to go back to their roots and use their resources to take back their power.



Empowering their own babies with their liquid gold, the Black Queens regained their strength, fortified the future of their children and reclaimed their crowns.

Dropping Knowledge

Lactation is a biological process in which a mother produces, within her own body, the milk needed to feed her baby. The more a baby nurses, the more milk is produced.

The first milk that is produced is called colostrum. It is very high in protein, low in fat, and contains many disease fighting antibodies, which provide the baby's first immunization as well as protection from infection.

Breastfeeding is beneficial, even if done for a short time. The milk the mother produces is custom made and provides everything the baby needs.

Providing this custom made sources of nourishment provides a deep sense of pride and satisfaction for the mother and the baby reaps all the benefits.

Resources

Many breastfeeding resources are available to support you, your family and friends, including:

La Leche League helps mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

Learn about La Leche League of Minnesota and the Dakotas at www.llofmndas.org

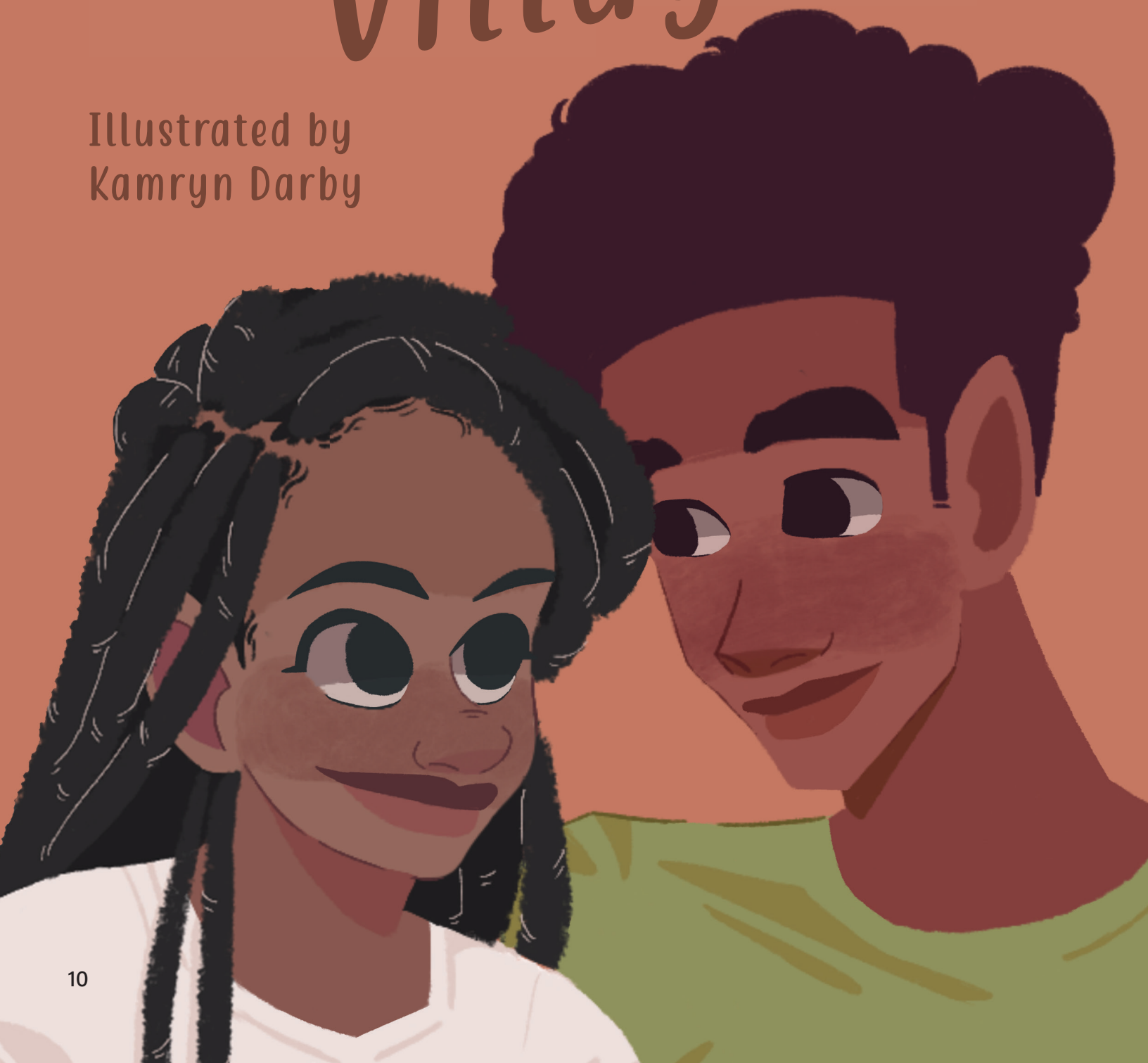
Chocolate Milk Club, founded by a midwife, lactation consultant and childbirth educator, serves women in the Twin Cities across the lifespan.

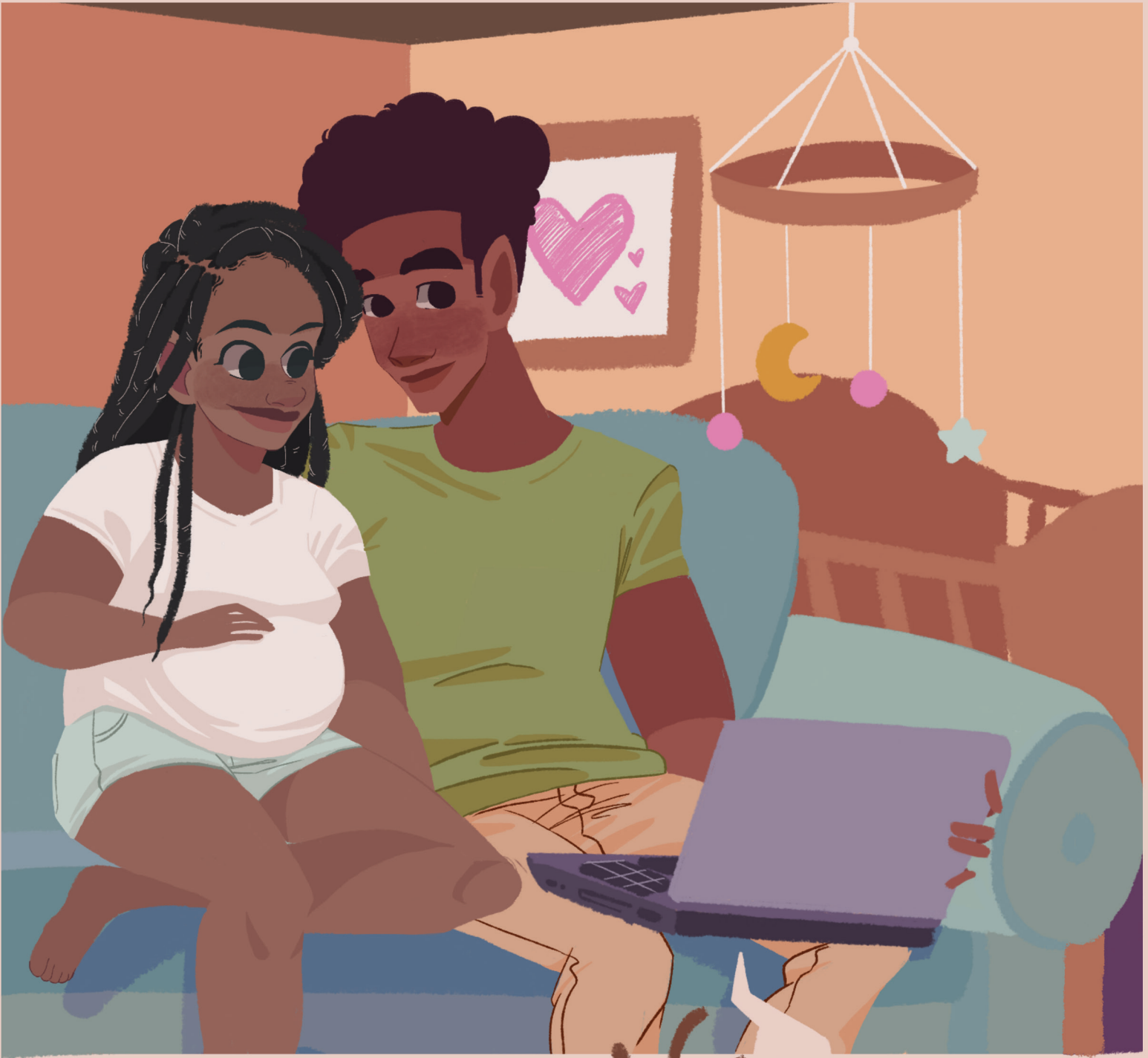
Find support by joining their Facebook group. www.facebook.com/groups/chocolatemilkclub



It Takes A Village!

Illustrated by
Kamryn Darby





♪ DING
DING ♪



★ CONGRATS! ★

We're so excited for you both. As you know, after our last lil' kiddo, I had a hard time keeping it together, so we formula fed. But I did breastfeed the older four.



The Anogonyes

Isn't breastfeeding a bit
old fashioned? Who's got
time for that?!



Darren



No, no, no. That child needs
to be breastfed for at
least six months. Your baby will
let you know when it's done!

I don't mind bottle feeding as long as it's not formula. I sort of felt useless with the older kids, but with Terri, I'm much more involved. Plus, the older kids get to learn how to feed her and change her diapers.



The Anogonyes

I struggled with breastfeeding. First, he wouldn't latch, and when he finally did, I couldn't produce enough milk. I couldn't get the hang of it, my milk production fluctuated. And I didn't really have any support. I'm thankful to see how that has changed and now I have a network of support through friends and family.



I don't know if I'll breastfeed when Jim and I have kids. I don't get much leave and using formula just seems easier.



To me there's just no substitute for the real deal. It's pretty much genetically tailored to your kid, and it's free! If you can produce it, you should use it. That's all I'm saying.

I guess it's true what they say-
it *really* does take a village!



DROPPING KNOWLEDGE

A breastfeeding mother establishes an undeniable connection between herself and the baby. It is a one-on-one moment, and skin-to-skin.

Fathers, partners, siblings, and other friends and family members can also form a strong bonded relationship. These relationships will provide a sense of security, protection, and belonging in the growing baby.

A father or partner can help support a nursing mother by fixing meals, doing housework, sitting quietly during a feeding session, rocking a sleepy baby, carrying an awake baby, entertaining with a song or poetry, and/or giving mother a back rub or foot massage.

A mother's support system should also help her feel comfortable while nursing. They should speak up in support of the nursing parent. This includes while in public and at family gatherings.

Be thankful for the village and trust in yourself.

RESOURCES

Many breastfeeding resources are available to support you, your family and friends, including:

Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition works collaboratively to create environments where breastfeeding is valued and supported to achieve natural infant feeding equity in all Minnesota communities.

Learn more at
www.mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org

WIC is a supplemental food, nutrition and breastfeeding program that helps eligible pregnant women, new mothers, babies and young children eat well, learn about nutrition and stay healthy.

Learn about
Ramsey County WIC at
www.ramseycounty.us/WIC

